



Chatham County, NC

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Ground Rules

Introduction & Background:

GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

The following ground rules have helped make meetings more productive:

- 1. Participate fully.** It’s alright to disagree. Everyone should have the opportunity to state his or her own views, regardless of rank or other differences.
- 2. Work on the problem.** Put other issues aside, including personalities, offices, or other differences. Show respect for each other.
- 3. Focus on interests, not positions.** Explain why you favor a particular course of action. Invite questions so you can explain your reasons fully. Balance advocacy and inquiry.
- 4. Share all relevant information.** Be specific. Agree on what important words mean. Discuss “undiscussable” issues.
- 5. Stay focused.** Discuss a topic long enough for everybody to be clear about it.
- 6. Decide how the group will make decisions.** Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed.

Adapted from *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups* by Roger Schwarz. Published by Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1994 and 2005.